



News Release

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UDOH Begins Prescription Program to Improve Mental Health Care

(Salt Lake City, UT) – The Utah Department of Health’s (UDOH) Medicaid program is launching a new program that monitors prescriptions for medicines that treat mental health disorders. The Utah Behavioral Pharmacy Management Program (BPMP) will review Medicaid pharmacy claims data that will improve patient care and reduce costs.

To program plans to:

- Help patients by making sure they get the right drug in the right dose through increased education for doctors and by checking claims data.
- Help patients avoid missed refills that can lead to hospitalizations, emergency room visits, and additional clinic visits.
- Help doctors know if a patient is taking similar medications prescribed by another doctor. Taking more than one drug for the same condition when it isn’t needed increases the risk of complications like headache or nausea as well as dangerous drug interactions.
- Reduce costs by avoiding drug duplication. The UDOH estimates that Medicaid spent more than \$55 million on drugs for mental health in 2003.

“We want our Medicaid clients to get the best care available. We’re pleased to implement a project that benefits our clients and providers while reducing costs,” said Julie Olson, Director, Bureau of Managed Health Care, UDOH.

The UDOH plans to reach up to 1,500 doctors, who currently prescribe mental health drugs, and the 5,500 Medicaid patients who take them. BPMP has already begun sending information to doctors.

- MORE -

Page 2 of 2 - UDOH Begins Prescription Program to Improve Mental Health Care

While Utah results are not yet available, Missouri recently began a program like BPMP and has already found a reduction of more than 90 percent in patients taking similar drugs prescribed by different doctors and a similar large reduction in the percent of missed refills.

There are more than 130 drugs used for improving mental health. “We are developing new and better medications quickly. That makes educating physicians about mental health drugs more important than ever. This program will help doctors, and patients while reducing costs,” stated Michael Stevens, M.D., Director of Psychopharmacology Research, Valley Mental Health and member of the Utah BPMP steering committee.

Eli Lilly and Company is providing funding for the two-year BPMP project, which is being implemented by Comprehensive NeuroScience, Inc. (CNS), of White Plains, N.Y. “We are pleased to be part of a program to reduce costs and improve treatment. We applaud UDOH for adopting this innovative program,” said Josh Smiley, Director, Public Health Sector Division, Eli Lilly.

Utah Medicaid, administered by the UDOH, covers families, children, pregnant women, aged, blind, and disabled people. To qualify, non-financial criteria must be met as well as income and asset criteria. For more information about Medicaid, visit www.health.utah.gov/medicaid, or call the Medicaid Information Line at 1-800-662-9651.

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